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BROWARD
County Public Schools

NewsRelease

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
600 SE Third Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301
browardschools.com
754-321-2300

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CONTACTS: Kathy Koch, Chief Public Information Officer, 754-321-2300

Broward Parents and Community Organizations Form Action Plan to Help Students Cope with Depression and Trauma

In the wake of two suicides that devastated the community this past week, parents and representatives from organizations throughout Broward County came together yesterday to discuss what they can do to help students at Marjory Stoneman Douglas (MSD) High School and throughout the county cope with trauma and depression. In attendance were representatives from Children's Services Council, City of Parkland, Jewish Adoption and Family Care Options (JAFCO), Henderson Behavioral Health, Broward County Public Schools, Jewish Family Services, MSD staff, United Way, Broward County, Broward Sheriff's Office, Coral Springs Police Department and more.

A preliminary plan was created for a community-wide campaign to reach and empower parents with tools to help protect their children. The first step was to develop a common message to cut through the clutter, so parents and youth have the same understanding about warning signs and where to turn for help.

It is important for parents to talk with their children and be able to recognize signs of personal crisis that could lead to suicide. Parents need to ask the screening yes-or-no questions from The Columbia Protocol to identify if someone is in crisis, and they should not worry that asking about suicide will put the idea into their children's heads. The questions can be found online at cssrs.columbia.edu.

"During the Spring break, I encourage you to take time to speak with your children every day. Dinners are a great time for family conversation," said Superintendent Robert Runcie. "We need to remove the stigma from talking about suicide."

"Schools are closed this week for Spring break, and parents want to know where they can get help for their children during this time," said Cindy Arenberg Seltzer, CEO of Children's Services Council, who convened the meeting at Eagles' Haven in Coral Springs.

"When school is back in session, families will need tools to help their children."

- The **Broward County Resiliency Center (BCRC)** at Pines Trail Park Amphitheater, 10561 Trails End in Parkland, has clinicians available from noon to 7 p.m. daily until April 1. Call 954-684-4265.
- During Spring break, children can visit the **Coral Springs Museum of Art**, 2855 Coral Springs Drive, where fun activities will be available in a supportive environment. Call 954-340-5000.
- **Eagles' Haven**, at 5655 Coral Ridge Drive is open 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday – Friday / 10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Saturday. Call 954-203-4249.

If a parent is concerned that there may be a threat as severe as suicide, call 9-1-1. Additional resources are only a phone call away.

- **2-1-1** 24/7 crisis hotline
- **954-740-MSD1 (6731)** 24/7 crisis hotline
- **Crisis Intervention YES team** 954-677-3113, Option 3
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text "FL" to 741741 for a live counselor

For additional local resources, visit browardschools.com/CrisisSupport.

The group will continue to work on the campaign and coordinate protocols for when students return to school after Spring break.

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Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) is the sixth-largest school district in the nation and the second-largest in the state of Florida. BCPS is Florida's first fully accredited school system since 1962. BCPS has more than 271,500 students and approximately 175,000 adult students in 234 schools, centers and technical colleges, and 88 charter schools. BCPS serves a diverse student population, with students representing 204 different countries and 191 different languages. Connect with BCPS: visit the website at browardschools.com, follow BCPS on Twitter @browardschools and Facebook at facebook.com/browardschools, and download the free BCPS mobile app.

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